

THE STURGIS WAGER

A DETECTIVE STORY.

By EDGAR MORETTE.

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CHAPTER V.—CONTINUED.

"Point five," resumed Sturgis, "the right arm was broken just above the wrist."

"Yes," said the physician, "I thought at first that the arm might have been broken in the collision with the cable car; but the discoloration of the flesh proves conclusively that the fracture occurred before death."

"Precisely. Now, it is possible that the man broke his arm when he fell, after being shot; but the contused wound looks to me as if it had been made by a severe blow with some blunt instrument."

"Possibly," admitted Thurston.

"This broken arm, if we can place it in its proper chronological position, may prove to be of some importance in the chain of evidence," mused Sturgis. "If the fracture occurred before the man was shot, that, of course, excludes the possibility of suicide; but, on the other hand, it also brings in an obstacle to the hypothesis of murder."

"How so?"

"Because we have settled, you will remember, that the shot was fired from the right of the victim, and close to him. Now, if he did not fire the shot himself the person who did must have reached over his right arm to do so. In that case, unless the victim was asleep or stupefied, would he not instinctively have raised his arm in self-defense, and thus deflected the weapon upward?"

"Evidently."

"Well, it is idle to speculate on this line for the present. Let us come to point six. You remember I called your particular attention to the cabman. Do you still think he was only drunk?"

"No," replied Thurston; "while he had unquestionably been drinking heavily, he also showed symptoms of narcotic poisoning."

"Then the presumption is that he had been drugged by those who wished to place the wounded man in his cab. I observed him closely and I am satisfied that he knows as little about his dead passenger as we do. He probably knows less about him, at all events, than the young man in the sealskin cap who gave the police the slip during the excitement which followed the overturning of the cab."

Sturgis paused a moment.

"This, I think," he continued, "covers all the evidence we have thus far collected in the Cab Mystery. It is quite satisfactory, as far as it goes, for it is circumstantial evidence, and, therefore, absolutely truthful. In the Knickerbocker bank mystery we have as yet no satisfactory data whatever; for everything we have heard concerning it has its origin in the fallible evidence of witnesses, and has, moreover, reached us third or fourth hand. There is, however, one fact that may, or may not, prove to be important. Have you noticed that these two mysteries are contemporaneous, and, therefore, that they may be related?"

"Do you think there is any connection between the two?" inquired Thurston, interested.

"I do not allow myself to think about it at all as yet," replied Sturgis; "I simply note the fact, that, so far as time is concerned, the Cab Mystery could be the sequel to the Knickerbocker Bank Mystery—that is all. Facts, my dear boy, are like words. A word is only an assemblage of meaningless letters until it becomes pregnant with sense by context. So, a fact, which, standing by itself, has no meaning, may, when correlated with other facts, become fraught with deep significance."

"And now," he continued, after a pause, "I think our work is concluded for the present. I shall be able to lay it aside for the night. Let me offer you a glass of sherry. Pleasant evening we spent at Sprague's to-night. I have a great admiration for him as an artist, and a great fondness for him as a man. Most of his friends are strangers to me, though. You know I have very little time to indulge in social dissipation. By the way, who is that Dr. Murdock with whom I have made this bet?"

"Oh! he is a physician, though now retired from practice. He devotes himself entirely to scientific research, especially in the domain of chemistry. He has made some important discoveries in organic chemistry, and they say he has succeeded in proving some of the supposed elementary metals to be compounds. He has quite an enviable reputation in the scientific world. I understand he is a remarkable man."

"That is evident at a glance. He showed himself this evening to be a clear thinker and a brilliant speaker. I should say he was something of a genius, and I should judge, moreover, that he was a man of magnificent nerve, capable of the most heroic actions, or—"

Sturgis hesitated.

"Or—?" asked Thurston.

"Of the most infamous cruelty and crime. It all depends upon whether or not his great mental attributes are under the control of a heart; a point upon which I am somewhat in doubt."

CHAPTER VI.

THE ARTIST.

Sprague was a dilettante in art as he was in life. If he had not been rich, he might perhaps have become a great artist. But, lacking the spur of poverty, he seemed incapable of sustained effort. Occasionally he was seized with a frenzy for labor; and, for weeks at a time he would shut himself up in his studio, until he had creditably accomplished some bit of work. But the fever was soon spent,

and a reaction invariably followed, during which palette and brush were taken up only in desultory fashion. Thus it was that at the age of eight and twenty, Sprague had painted a few pictures which had attracted favorable attention at the annual exhibitions of the Academy of Design, and which the critics had spoken of as "promising;" and thus it was that the promise was as yet unfulfilled, and that Sprague, though a man of undoubted talent, was not likely ever to rank as a genius in his profession.

Sturgis, with his keen insight into human nature, fully realized the potential capacities of the artist, and at times he could not control his impatience at his friend's inert drifting through life. But, with all their differences, these two men held each other in the highest esteem, each admiring in the other those very qualities which were lacking in himself.

The artist lived in a fashionable quarter of the city, in a bachelor apartment which included a large and commodious studio fitted up according to the latest canons of artistic taste.

On this particular New Year's morning, after waking and observing, by the filtering of a few bright sunbeams through the closely drawn blinds, that it was broad daylight, he stretched himself with a voluptuous yawn and prepared to relapse into the sensuous enjoyment of that semi-somnolent state which succeeds a night of calm and refreshing sleep.

Just as he was settling himself comfortably, however, he was startled by a knock at the bedroom door. Most men, under the circumstances, would have betrayed some vexation at being thus unceremoniously disturbed. But there was no suspicion of annoyance in Sprague's cheery voice, as he exclaimed:

"You cannot come in yet, Mrs. O'Meagher. I am asleep, and I shall be asleep for another hour at the least. Surely you cannot have forgotten that to-day is a holiday. Happy New Year! You have time to go to several masses before—"

"Get up, old lazybones; and don't keep a man waiting at your door in this inhospitable way, when he is in a hurry," interrupted a voice whose timbre was not that of the housekeeper, Mrs. O'Meagher.

"Oh! is that you, Sturgis?" laughed the artist. "Aren't you ashamed of yourself to come routing honest men out of bed at this unseemly hour? Wait a minute, till I put on my court costume, that I may receive you with the honors and ceremonies due to your rank and station."

A couple of minutes later the artist, picturesquely attired in a loose oriental dressing gown and fez, opened the door to his friend, Ralph Sturgis. "Come in, old man," he said, cordially extending his hand to the reporter, "you are welcome at any hour of the day or night. What is it now? This is not your digestion call, I presume."

"No," replied Sturgis, "I merely dropped in to say that I should be unable to take our projected bicycle trip this afternoon. I shall probably be busy with the Knickerbocker bank case all day. By the way, if you would like to come to the bank with me, I shall be glad of your company. I am on my way there now."

"I should like nothing better," said Sprague, "but I have made an appointment for this morning with a—er—with a sitter."

"What, on New Year's day, you heathen!"

Sturgis observed the artist closely, and then added, quizzically:

"Accept my congratulations, old man."

"Your congratulations?" inquired Sprague, coloring slightly.

"Yes; my congratulations and my condolence. My congratulations on the fact that she is young and beautiful, and possessed of those qualities of mind and heart which—so on and so forth. My condolence because I fear you are hit at last."

"What do you mean?" stammered the artist, sheepishly; "do you know her? What do you know about her?"

"Nothing whatever," replied Sturgis, laughing, "except what you are telling me by your hesitations, your reticence and your confusion."

The artist spoke after a moment of thoughtful silence.

"Your inductions in this case are premature, to say the least. My sitter is a young lady, so much is undeniably true. And there is no doubt in my mind as to her possession of all the qualities you jocularly attribute to her; but my interest in her is only that of an artist in a beautiful and charming woman."

"At any rate," he added, after a moment's hesitation, "I hope so; for I have heard that she is as good as betrothed to another man."

The reporter's keen ear detected in his friend's tones a touch of genuine sadness of which the artist himself was probably unconscious. Laying his hand gently upon Sprague's shoulder, he said, gravely:

"I hope so, too, old man; for you are one of those foolish men whose lives can be ruined by an unhappy love affair. I suppose it's useless to preach to you—more's the pity—but, in my humble opinion, no woman's love is worth the sacrifice of a good man's life."

"Yes, I know your opinion on that subject, you old cynic," replied Sprague, "but you need not worry on my account; not yet, at all events. I am still safe; the portrait is almost finished; and I should be a fool to walk into such a scrape with my eyes wide open."

"Humph!" ejaculated Sturgis, skeptically, "when a man makes a fool of himself for a woman, it matters little whether his eyes be open or shut; the result is the same."

Sprague laughed somewhat uneasily; and then, as if to change the subject:

"Come and see the picture," he said. "I should like your opinion of it."

The reporter consulted his watch. "I shall have to come back some other time for that," he replied; "I must hurry off now to keep my appointment with Mr. Dunlap."

He started toward the door; but suddenly facing Sprague again, he held out his hand to the artist, who pressed it cordially.

"Good-bye, old man," he said, affectionately, "be as sensible as you can, and don't wantonly play with the fire."

And before Sprague could frame an answer, the reporter was gone.

The artist remained thoughtfully standing until his friend's footsteps had died away in the distance. Then he turned and walked slowly into the studio. Here, in the middle of the room, stood an easel, upon which was the portrait of a beautiful young girl.

Sprague gazed at it long and earnestly. Then he heaved an almost inaudible sigh.

"Sturgis is right," he said to himself, turning away at last, "and—and I am a confounded idiot!"

CHAPTER VII.
AGNES MURDOCK.

In a quarter of the city which is rapidly surrendering to the relentless encroachments of trade, there still stand a few old-fashioned houses, the sole survivors of what was once an aristocratic settlement.

One by one their fellows have been sapped and swept away by the resistless tide of commerce, until these ancient dwellings, stubbornly contesting a position already lost, now rear their sepulchral brownstone fronts in stiff and solitary grandeur—huge sarcophagi in a busy mart.

One of these houses stands well back from the street line, the traditional backyard of the ordinary New York dwelling having been sacrificed, in this instance, to make room for a tiny garden, which is separated from the street by a tall spiked iron railing, behind which grows an arbor vitae hedge. The former serves as a defense against the marauding of the irrepressible metropolitan gamins; while the latter confers upon



"I SHOULD THINK YOU WOULD WELCOME HARD WORK AS A PLEASANT CHANGE."

the occupants of the garden a semblance of protection from the curious gaze of the passers-by.

This property, having been the subject of an interminable lawsuit, had remained for many years unoccupied, and was even now beginning to be regarded by some of the neighbors as haunted, when at last it was bought by Dr. Murdock, a wealthy widower with an only daughter. For some months masons and carpenters were at work; and then, one day, the new occupants entered into possession.

The Murdocks lived quietly but luxuriously, like people accustomed to wealth. They had their horses and carriages, their house at Lenox and at Newport, and their yacht. Their circle of acquaintances was large, and included not only the fashionable set, but also a scientific, literary and artistic set. For Dr. Murdock was a chemist of national reputation, a member of several scientific bodies, and a man of great intelligence and broad culture.

On this particular New Year's morning Dr. Murdock was seated in his study, apparently absorbed in reading the daily papers, a pile of which lay upon his table. His occupation might perhaps more accurately be described as skimming the daily papers; for each journal in turn was subjected to a rapid scrutiny, and only a few columns seemed occasionally to interest the reader.

There was no haste visible in the doctor's actions, each one of which appeared to be performed with the coolness and deliberation of a man who is not the slave of time; and yet, so systematic were they, that, all lost motion being avoided, every operation was rapidly completed.

In a short time the pile of newspapers had been disposed of, and the doctor, lighting a choice cigar, leaned back in his comfortable armchair and placidly puffed the wreaths of fragrant smoke ceilingward. He was apparently satisfied with the world and with himself, this calm, passionless man. And yet a sharp observer would have noted an almost imperceptible furrow between the eyes, which might perhaps have indicated only the healthy mental activity of an ordinary man; but which, in one given so little to outward manifestation of feeling as Dr. Murdock, might also betoken more or less serious annoyance or displeasure.

While the chemist sat in this pensive attitude, there was a rustle of skirts outside, and presently there came a gentle knock at the door of the study.

"Come in!" said Murdock, removing the cigar from his lips.

The door opened, admitting a tall and beautiful young girl, evidently not long out of her teens.

"Did I disturb you, father?" she asked, stepping lightly into the room.

"No, Agnes," replied Murdock, courteously; "as you see, I am indulging in a period of dolce far niente."

The young girl laughed a clear, silvery laugh, as her eyes fell upon the pile of newspapers.

"If the reading of a dozen newspapers is dolce far niente, I should think you would welcome hard work as a pleasant change."

"Oh!" replied her father, "the work I have done on those has not amounted to much. I have only been gleaming the news from the morning papers."

"Yes," he added, answering her surprised look, "it takes a deal of skim milk to yield a little cream."

The last paper which Murdock had been examining lay upon the desk before him. From the closely printed columns stood out in bold relief the glaring headlines:

MURDER IN A CAB.

MYSTERIOUS ASSASSINATION OF AN UNKNOWN MAN, IN BROAD DAYLIGHT.

CABMAN REILLY DENIES ALL KNOWLEDGE OF THE CRIME.

Miss Murdock's glance rested carelessly upon these words for an instant. They aroused in her nothing more than the mild curiosity which attaches to events of palpitating human interest, when they have been congealed in the columns of the daily newspapers and served to palates already sated with sensational verbiage.

"Mary said you wished to speak to me," said the young girl, after a short pause. "I thought I would step in to see you before going to Mr. Sprague's."

"To Sprague's?" inquired Murdock, fixing his keen eyes upon the young girl. "Ah, yes; I remember he spoke of the appointment last night. How is the portrait coming on?"

"It is almost finished. Probably only one or two more sittings, at the most, will be necessary."

Agnes seemed slightly embarrassed by the fixity of her father's searching glance. She settled herself in an armchair and assumed a look of deferent expectancy.

[To Be Continued.]

AN INVOLUNTARY THIEF.

Drove Off with Another Man's Horse and Wagon and Got Into Trouble.

There is no fun in being a criminal, even though it be by accident. George H. Jessup, the novelist and playwright, who has now a big place in Cabintely, Ireland, once lived in San Francisco, says the Philadelphia Saturday Evening Herald. There was an epidemic of horse stealing at that time, which was followed by a sympathetic attack of lynching. Vigilance committees were everywhere, and strangers on strange horses were viewed with suspicion.

Jessup and a friend were out driving one day and took part in a picnic where they knew nobody. They passed several pleasant hours at San Mateo, where the festival took place, and then remembered an important engagement. They left the crowd and went to the neighboring grove where the horses were tethered, and unfasting their own rig, as they supposed, jumped in and drove off. The horse had trotted two or three miles when the friend said:

"George, this isn't our horse. It's a larger and better animal."

Jessup looked at the steed carefully and replied: "Upon my word, you are right. This isn't our carriage robe either."

It was a handsome affair, and they looked at it with some curiosity. On the inside of it was sewed a piece of cloth bearing the name and address of the owner. The friend gasped:

"George, do you know the owner of this rig is the head of the vigilance committee?"

Mr. Jessup broke into a cold perspiration as he replied: "Let's drive to the nearest telegraph station and wire him."

They drove like mad, and when they reached the station made arrangements at the hotel to have the horse and wagon cleaned. Then they sent a dispatch, and waited their fate.

In due time the irate owner arrived, and to their inexpressible joy he came in their own vehicle. There were explanations and apologies, and, according to California custom, the luckless Jessup was compelled to "treat the house," an act which kept him poor for the remainder of the month.

Gethsemane.

The Garden of Gethsemane, which was so closely interwoven with the closing scenes in the life of Christ, is now a desolate spot, containing a few old and shattered olive trees, the trunks of which are supported by stones, though some of the branches are flourishing. It is a small square inclosure of about 200 feet, surrounded by a high wall, a little way out of Jerusalem, below St. Stephen's gate, and near the foot of the Mount of Olives. Biblical reference to it is made in Matt. 26:30-56; Mark 14:26-52; Luke 22:39-53, and John 18:1-14. The garden is the property of the Latin Christians, the Greek church having fixed upon another locality as the true site of Gethsemane.

Different Denominations.

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EASTBOUND.	No. 1.	No. 5.	No. 3.
Lv Louisville	7:45am	4:00pm	7:45pm
Ar Shelbyville	8:10am	4:35pm	8:05pm
Ar Launceberg	8:30am	4:55pm	8:25pm
Ar Versailles	8:50am	5:15pm	8:45pm
Ar Lexington	9:10am	5:35pm	9:05pm

WESTBOUND.	No. 6.	No. 2.	No. 4.
Lv Lexington	7:30am	4:35pm	5:15am
Ar Versailles	7:55am	5:00pm	5:35am
Ar Launceberg	8:20am	5:25pm	5:55am
Ar Shelbyville	8:40am	5:45pm	6:15am
Ar Louisville	9:00am	6:05pm	6:35am

EASTBOUND.	No. 13.	No. 11.	STATIONS.	No. 12.	No. 14.
Lv Louisville	4:00pm	7:45am	Lv Louisville	7:40pm	10:10am
Ar Lexington	6:25pm	10:00am	Lv Launceberg	8:30pm	8:10am
Ar Versailles	6:50pm	10:25am	Ar Harrodsburg	4:40pm	7:30am
Ar Lexington	7:20pm	10:55am	Ar Burgin	4:50pm	7:40am

WESTBOUND.	No. 15.	No. 17.	STATIONS.	No. 16.	No. 18.
Lv Lexington	4:00pm	7:45am	Lv Louisville	10:40am	7:45pm
Ar Versailles	6:25pm	9:10am	Lv Shelbyville	9:10am	6:15pm
Ar Lexington	6:47pm	9:35am	Lv Versailles	7:50am	5:02pm
Ar Louisville	7:10pm	9:58am	Lv Harrodsburg	7:30am	4:40pm
Ar Louisville	7:40pm	10:28am	Lv Georgetown	7:00am	4:10pm

EASTBOUND.	No. 1.	No. 5.	STATIONS.	No. 6.	No. 2.
Lv Louisville	7:45am	4:00pm	Lv Louisville	10:40am	7:40pm
Ar Lexington	8:22am	4:30pm	Lv Versailles	7:50am	5:02pm
Ar Lexington	8:50am	4:55pm	Lv Lexington	8:00pm	11:45am
Ar Lexington	9:15pm	5:20pm	Lv Lexington	8:30am	11:55am

STATIONS.	No. 1.	No. 2.
Lv Louisville	7:45am	7:45pm
Ar Lexington	10:45am	10:30pm
Ar Knoxville	7:00pm	7:45am
Ar Asheville	7:10am	8:10pm
Ar Savannah	7:20am	8:20pm
Ar Jacksonville	7:30am	8:30pm

STATIONS.	No. 1.	No. 2.
Lv Chattanooga	8:05pm	6:55am
Ar Atlanta	10:25pm	11:55am
Ar Macon	12:35am	2:25pm
Ar Jacksonville	8:30am	10:00pm
Lv Chattanooga	5:10pm	6:45am
Ar Birmingham	10:00pm	11:45am
Ar Meridian	2:30am	9:30pm
Ar New Orleans	8:30am	1:30pm

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No. 6, free observation chair-car Lexington to Louisville.

No. 4, sleeping-car Birmingham to Louisville, via Lexington.

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